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Dico fra me pensando :
 A che tante facelle ?
 Che fa l'aria infinita, e quel profondo
 Infinito seren ? che vuol dir questa
 Solitudine immensa ?

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VENETIAN *BUSINELLO* = ITALIAN *EMISSARIO*.

In the Cicogna collection at Venice cod. 3637 (Correr 3350) is a series of papers dated Sept. 28, 1836, and signed by the celebrated architect G. Casoni. Under the general title "Notizia storica dell' Emissario al Fiume Sile denominato il Businello" are collected recopies of this essay and the various notes used by Casoni in the construction of it. It seems that in the diversion of the Sile's course, incident upon the exclusion of fresh water from the Venetian lagoon, the pestiferous effects produced by the mixture of the river in the stagnant pools of salt water were not entirely overcome, but simply transferred to the eastward to the territory surrounding the river's new mouth. It was accordingly suggested, as the result of agitation culminating in 1695, that the burden be divided, by distributing the flow of the river through the new and the old beds, by means of a gate-way opened at their junction. The adoption of this proposal led to a discussion on the reform which lasted with decision for and against the fiume, for some 150 years. This gate-way appears in the documents on the subject under the name *Businello*; and the varying treatment of this term by the successive authorities invites inquiry as to what it really means. Casoni refers to it seven times simply as *il Businello*, e. g. loc. cit. no. 4, doc. 4, 1^a: "1695, 5 dicembre decretò l'apertura del Businello ossia di una catterata, dalla quale una parte sola dell' acqua del Sile si ottenesse." Here also the name is interpreted carefully by the succeeding phrase; and while we have the undecisive "di esso Businello" (ibid. doc. 5, 2^a, 4^a), "di riattirare quel Businello" (ibid.) and "Questo Businello produsse, etc." (ibid. 3^a, doc. 7), as a rule there is a distinct apology for the word (ibid. doc. 6, 1^a):

"l'apertura di un emissario che venne denominato Businello, val a dire l'apertura alla sponda destra di una catterata larga piedi 9, alta piedi 3." So far indeed is Casoni from feeling it a common noun that on five occasions he uses it as a proper name in apposition (ibid. 4, 4, 1^a): "Questo nuovo Emissario Businello soggiaque a grandissime vicende"; (ibid. doc. 6, 1, title) "Promenoria dell' Emissario del Sile Businello"; (doc. 4, 1^b) "l'acqua proveniente dall' Emissario Businello"; (doc. 5, 3^b) "Anche senza la riapertura dell' Emissario Businello"; (ibid. 4^a) "gli effetti prodotti dall' emissario Businello."

Antonio Tadini writing in 1819 likewise recognizes the exotic character of the word: in his title "Dell' Emissario del Sile volgarmente detto il Businello" (Milano, Paolo Giusti, 1819, 59 pp.); (p. 4, l. 15) "in via di sperimenti si aprì uno sfogatoio chiamato il Businello"; (p. 57) "l'Emissario o Businello del Sile"; while elsewhere (pp. 5, 6, 7, 8, 33, 34, 41, 44) he uses simply: "il Businello" or "il B. del Sile." The Alvisopoli in the same year in Venice published an "Esame delle opinioni di Benedetto Castelli e di Alfonso Borelli sulle lagune di Venezia, aggiuntavi (pp. 99-142) un'appendice sulla riapertura del Businello"; and among some 27 occurrences of the term we find "del nuovo Businello" (p. 104), "del Businello secondo" (p. 105, note), and the adverbial expression "a Businello aperto" (p. 116), which are in the direction of considering *Businello* a common noun. Filiassi again (Riflessioni sopra i fiumi e le lagune, Giuseppe Pignotti, Venezia, 1817) is in doubt (p. 45, l. 7): "uno sbocco si aprisse ad esso nella laguna, detto il Businello," with one possible occurrence of the common noun form (p. 64, l. 1): "Chiuso nel 1769 il Businello del Sile." The fact that in all of these works the word is capitalized is, of course, unimportant; not only because there was as yet little regularity in capitalization generally, but because such words as *fiume*, *taglio*, *mare*, *emissario*, pure common nouns, are nevertheless favored with large initials in these same books.

In any case, reference to the original documents in the discussion would have determined for them the precise status of the term. The papers of the agitation previous to the construction of the dam, as well, apparently, as some of the deliberations of

the Venetian senate, are no longer extant. For letters of the Water Commissioners to the Doge dated July 6, 1695 (Archiv. di Stato, Venezia, Atti del Senato Terra, Senato I, Filza 1196), and of Girolamo Vesti Fiorentino dated July 14 (ibid.), refer to an unavailable previous decision adverse to the construction of this work. The letter of the Savii "propose la costruttione di un *Businello* nell'Arzere vicino alle porte del Lioncello . . . e perciò facendo un tal *Businello* sarà l'operatione permanente e sicura" and they request his Serenity "degnarsi di fare una permuta del decreto già concesso, e ordinare che sii fatto il *Businello* sudetto . . . tanto essendo l'eterare [*sic*] dal predetto Sile 27 piedi d'acqua per li portelli, come da un *Businello*." Vesti's communication is to the same purport, begging the Senate "di comutarli il primo decreto con il permetter a gli interessati di far a loro spese un *businello* nell'Arzere vicino alle porte del Lioncello." The Senate on Aug. 3 (ibid. last doc.) voted that "resti permesso agli interessati di far a loro spese un *Businello* nell'Intestadura in Bocca di Valle alle Porte del Sile." This is executed on Aug. 9 by the Savii who "commettimo al Fede Anzolo Garnizzan Proto di poter far . . . un *businello* nell'Arzere, etc.," later also using the phrase "per detto *Businello*." On Sept. 26, a letter of the Savii again refers to the "faccitura del *Businello* alle Nuove Porte del Sile," and there occur later the phrases *a detto B.*, *di detto B.* In their letter of Oct. 1: "la perfetione delle medeme operationi . . . e *Businello* sia permesso, etc." Oct. 23 there was "stabilita dalla pub. aucta l'erettione d'un *Businello* in Bocca di Valle, in vicinanza delle Porte del Sile. . . . L'anderà pte. che trovandosi opportuna la costrutne del nuovo *Businello*." The Savii again Dec. 16: "che fosse permesso agli interessati di far a loro spese un *businello* nell'Arzere vicino alle porte del Lioncello; . . . venendo suggerito stimasse più proprio far questo *businello* nell'Intestatura in bocca di valle"; Nov. 8: "La rotta fatta dal *Businello* al medesimo . . . dichiarandosi in appresso di rimettere lo stesso *Businello* con pietre nuove." Nov. 29: "del passato *Businello*; . . . come per altra suma di denaro da impiegarsi nella nuova costruzione d'altro *businello* più forte." Other documents, Oct. 8,

24, 29, contain examples of the words used simply with the definite article.

It is consistent, of course, that those histories based on the original papers should show a similarly decisive use of this name. In "Relazioni intorno ai danni del *Businello* chiuso introdotte nella Scritt^a. del N. U. Foscari Presentato li 27 marzo 1773" (Archiv. di Stato, Atti della Magis. delle acque, 975, part II, doc. xv, 7^a) appears "fu del 1695, 3 ag^{to} in gratia dell'arrecordo decretato che a titolo d'esperienza far si dovesse un *Businello* nell'Intestatura in bocca di Valle . . . restò permesso all'acqua passare per il nuovo *Businello*"; (ibid. 7^b) "fu permesso fare un altro *Businello*"; (ibid. 14^b) "la chiusura di Fossi, Fossetta, e *Businello*"; (ibid. 28^a) "a *Businello* chiuso" and "a *Businello* aperto" (twice); (ibid. 35^a) "un *Businello* fu aperto" and the difficult phrase "a *Businello* uguale." Only once in this collection among some three score occurrences of the word, and that, too, in a document dated 1772, is there any indication of hesitation about its legitimacy: "di essa divisione denominata *Businello*." This doubt, however, arose relatively early. In a letter of Zuane Filopisi, 25 Zugno 1725 (Sen. Terra 1726, Sen. I, f^o 1651 sub 18 Marzo) 1^b: "fu suggerita la costruzione d'uno sbalzo detto *Businello* mediante il quale . . ." So the great historian of the lagoons, Bernardino Zendrini (*Memorie storiche dello stato antico e moderno delle lagune di Venezia, Padova, 1736, also 1821, Stamp. del Seminario*), II, p. 467: "formando uno stramazzo o *businello* nella intestadura"; p. 231, "consisteva questa nel formare uno stramazzo, che chiamossi poi *Businello*," where the chronology is somewhat reversed, and the capitalization inconsistent.

But the earliest documents are conclusive: their use of *businello*, uncapitalized, in conjunction with the indefinite article, such adjectives as *altro*, *nuovo*, *secondo*, and in adverbial phrases *a businello aperto*, *chiuso*, *uguale* establishes its existence as a common noun, used here in a general and not a specific sense. It is by the later architects, not perfectly familiar with the popular origin of the *businello* scheme, that the word is misunderstood and limited as a proper name to this particular cutting. They may have felt, for instance, that it had something to do with the

well-known Businello family : in fact, Pietro Businello was Cancelliere Grande in 1698 and must have been interested in the passionate debate the work aroused. But most of them, as Antonio Tadini, must have felt its dialectical nature, "called by the people *businello*" he says ; it is not in fact till Casoni, in the middle of the nineteenth century, that the term is completely confused. And it remains to explain how the name happened to be applied to this gate-way, northeast of Torcello and not to others of similar nature, for instance, at Forcarigole, on the Lerin near Vicenza, and on the Livenza (Zendrini, op. cit., II, 119, 139, 166). But the answer is easily found. Those works were part of engineering plans, conceived by educated architects, and draughted in the Italian language. While the Businello del Sile was the result of a popular agitation emanating from the peasants affected by the river's distortion. Having decided on their remedy, they naturally presented it to the Senate in their own way : not familiar with the technical term they sought, they created the word which best expressed the idea : and the double diminutive, aside from being characteristic generally of the Venetian folk-speech, may also have seemed to add humility to their request—a *businello* could do much less damage to the lagoons than a mere *buso*. Also the word was familiar to them as the cutting, or gateway through a hedge (Boerio). The rarity of the word in other places is due merely to the non-existence of engineers who write in Venetian. Intrinsically *businello* bears every stamp of authenticity as a common noun of the Venetian dialect, and should be added to the next edition of Boerio's work.

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CONTEMPORARY GERMAN FICTION AND NARRATIVE POETRY.

The following list of important works of contemporary German fiction and narrative poetry is presented in the hope that it may be of service to teachers of German who have had no opportunity to do a considerable amount of reading in the field

in question. I thoroughly appreciate the difficulties and dangers that beset the compiler of such a list who is not so fortunate as to be located right in the midst of things, as well as the usual thanklessness of a selection of the "one hundred best books" and similar ventures, and yet the disadvantage in the way of insufficient library facilities under which many of our teachers labor encourage me to submit in the list below the results of my experience in connection with a course on contemporary German fiction and narrative poetry. Criticism is, after all, a matter of personal opinion, and I do not for one moment expect that this list will be universally accepted as it stands ; my purpose in publishing it will be accomplished if it succeeds in eliciting a discussion of comparative values in recent fiction, for it seems to me that the field of contemporary literature is sadly neglected in our modern language periodicals as well as in our graduate instruction. It need scarcely be emphasized that the list includes a number of works that I mention not because of their inherent literary merits but rather because of their literary-historical interest, as characteristic of a specific movement or tendency, for example, and, similarly, various works are quoted in connection with certain authors because they mark definite phases of their literary career, and not necessarily because I regard them as their best productions. The field covered is approximately that from the restoration of the German Empire in 1871 to the present day.

I. NOVELS.—Anzengruber, *Der Sternsteinhof*; Helene Böhlau, *Der Rangierbahnhof*; (Georg Hermann) Borchardt, *Jettchen Geberts Geschichte*; Dahn, *Ein Kampf um Rom*; Ebers, *Homo Sum*; Ernst, *Asmus Sempers Jugendland*; Fischer, *Die Freude am Licht*; Fontane, *Vor dem Sturm*, *Frau Jenny Treibel*, *Effie Briest*; Franzos, *Ein Kampf ums Recht*; Frenssen, *Die drei Getreuen*, *Jörn Uhl*, *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*; Handel-Manzetti, *Jesse und Maria*; Carl Hauptmann, *Mathilde*, *Einhart der Lächler*; Heer, *Der König der Bernina*; Herzog, *Die Wiskottens*; Hesse, *Peter Camenzind*; Hoffmann, *Der eiserne Rittmeister*; Ricarda Huch, *Ludolf Ursleu*; Jensen, *Eddystone*, *Die Pfeifer vom Dusenbach*; Kretzer, *Meister Timpe*; Krüger, *Gottfried Kämpfer*; Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks*; Ompteda, *Eysen*; von Polenz, *Der Büttnerbauer*, *Der Grabenhäger*,